



Alcohol and Other Drug Use Health Risks Among Rhode Island Public High School Students *1997 through 2005*

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is an anonymous and voluntary survey among random samples of high school students in over 50 states, territories, and municipalities nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed the YRBS to monitor risk behaviors for the major causes of mortality, disease, injury, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. In the spring of 1997, 2001, 2003 and 2005, Rhode Island (RI) administered the YRBS to 1,528, 1,392, 1,814 and 2,362 adolescents, with response rates of 60%, 63%, 66%, and 71% respectively. Weighted findings are representative of 9th to 12th grade public high school students statewide and can be used to make important inferences concerning health-risk behaviors. The RI Departments of Health, Education, and Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals provide funding and other support for the YRBS.

Donald Perry, MPA and Laura Pitt, MPH prepared this report. For additional information, contact Donald Perry, RI Department of Health (401) 222-7628 or Jan Mermin, RI Department of Education (401) 222-8954 or visit the RI YRBS website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/chic/statistics/yrbs.php>.

KEY FINDINGS

Alcohol Use

In 2005, 43% of both male and female Rhode Island high school students had at least one drink of alcohol in the month prior to the survey, down significantly from previous surveys, beginning at 54% for males and 51% for females in 1997. Drinking increased dramatically by grade level, from 32% among 9th graders to 59% among 12th graders, in 2005. The percentage of heavy drinkers, those students having five or more drinks in a row at least once in the past month, dropped significantly from a high of 32% in 1997 to 25% in 2005. Heavy drinking increased substantially by grade level, from 16% among 9th graders to 37% among 12th graders in 2005.

Other Drug Use

A quarter of high school students used marijuana during the 30 days preceding the survey in 2005, down somewhat from previous survey periods, with only slightly lower usage among females than males. The use of marijuana increased by grade level, with markedly higher levels of usage among 12th graders (34%) than other grade levels in 2005.

The trend in cocaine was nearly unchanged from most previous survey periods, with 3% of students using cocaine in the past month in 2005. Males, however, were more than twice as likely to use cocaine than females, with rates of 5% and 2%, respectively, in 2005. Twelfth graders appeared to have the highest cocaine usage (5%) by grade in 2005.

Although the use of inhalants was stable between 2003 and 2005, the overall trend in lifetime use showed a significant decrease from a high of 21% in 1997 to 10% in 2005. The trend was similar for both male and female students. Ninth graders appeared to have the highest level of inhalant use (12%) by grade in 2005.

Lifetime Use, Age of initiation, and Use on School Property

Marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol were the three most prevalent forms of drugs used by Rhode Island high school students in 2005, with lifetime usage of 43%, 45% and 70%, respectively. Lifetime rates were lower for methamphetamines and ecstasy (both 6%), with little difference by sex or grade. Overall, 4% of students had tried heroin, with a rate more than twice as high for males (5%) than females (2%) in 2005.

There were significant decreases between 1997 and 2005 in the percentage of students using alcohol or cigarettes before age 13, but little change in those trying marijuana. In 2005, males appeared more likely than females to try marijuana or alcohol before age 13, and 9th graders appeared more likely than other students to report using alcohol before age 13.

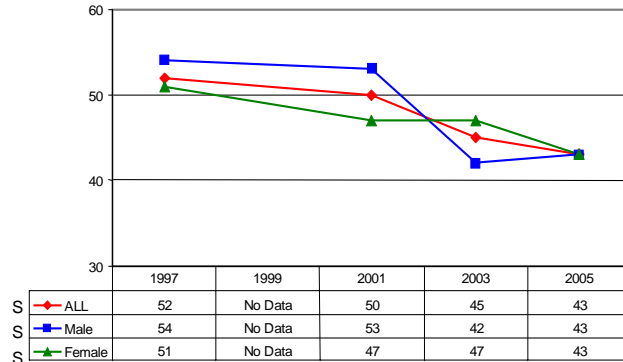
The percentage of students using cigarettes on school property decreased significantly between 1997 and 2005, from 20% to 8%. Little change was seen in the percentage of students using marijuana or alcohol on school property. Nearly a quarter of students were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property in 2005, which was a significant downward trend from 29% in 1997. Males also had a significant decrease from 1997 to 2005, and 11th and 12th graders in 2005 did appear to have slightly higher rates than younger students for being offered, sold, or given drugs.

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

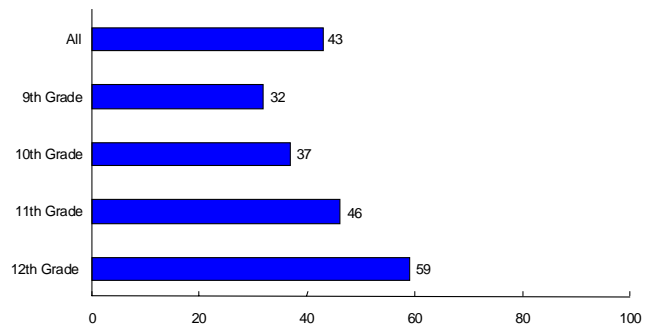
Risk Behavior: Alcohol Use

Rationale: In 2000, 5% of 15-20 year old drivers nationwide who were involved in crashes that resulted in injuries had been drinking alcohol. In addition, 22% of 15-20 year old drivers involved in fatal crashes also had been drinking alcohol. Alcohol use is associated with 20% of fatalities among those less than 15 years old.

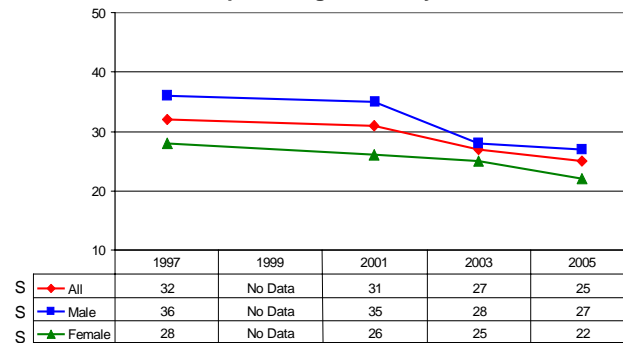
Percentage of RI high school students who had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey - YRBS



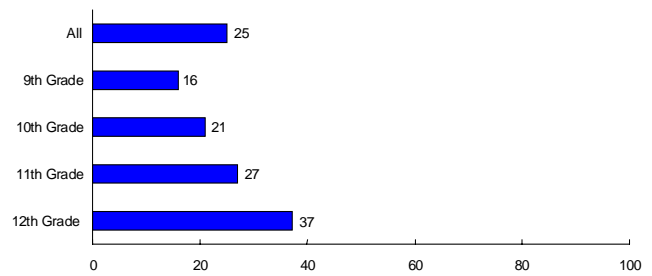
Percentage of RI high school students who had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, within a couple of hours, on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey - YRBS



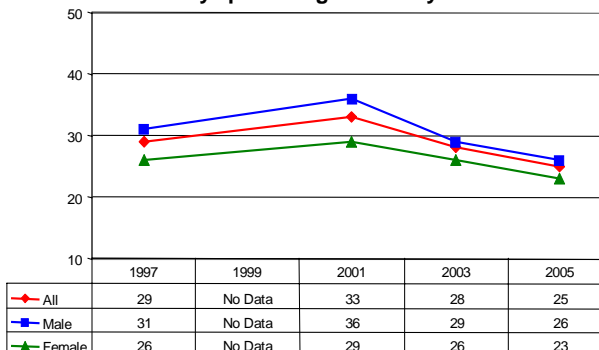
Percentage of RI high school students who had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, within a couple of hours, on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey - 2005 YRBS



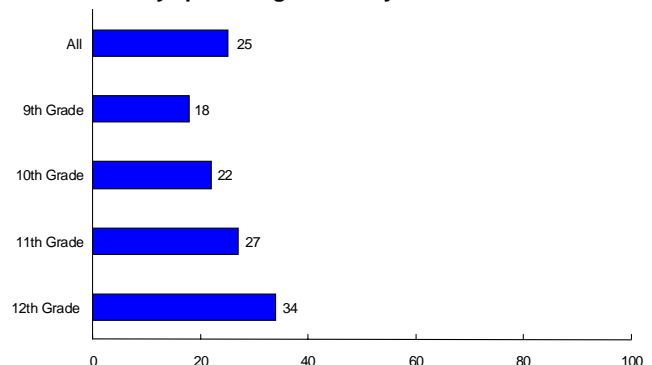
Risk Behavior: Other Drug Use

Rationale: Drug use is related to suicide, early unwanted pregnancy, school failure, delinquency, and transmissions of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Drug use is greater among youth in the U.S. than has been documented in any other industrialized nation in the world.

Percentage of RI high school students who used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey - 2005 YRBS



Note: An "S" next to the line graph legend box denotes a statistically significant linear change.

Source: 1997 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1528)

2003 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1814)

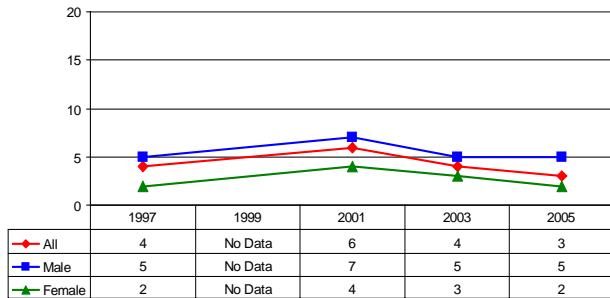
2001 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1392)

2005 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=2362)

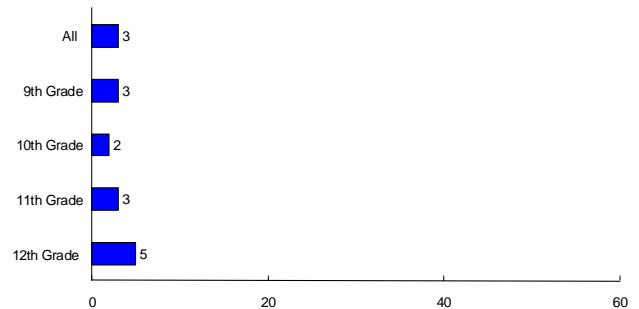
Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Risk Behavior: Other Drug Use (Continued)

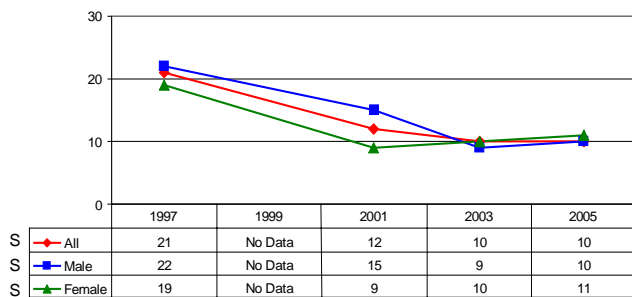
Percentage of RI high school students who used any form of cocaine including powder, crack or freebase one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey - YRBS



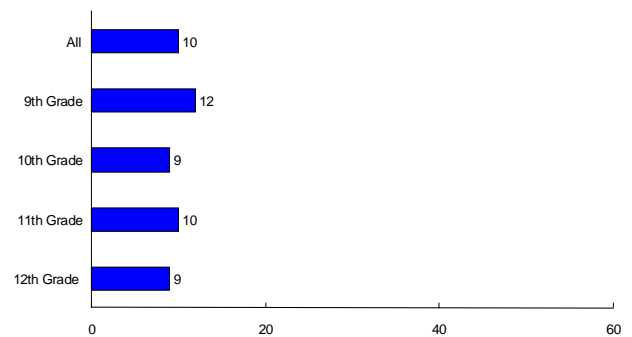
Percentage of RI high school students who used any form of cocaine including powder, crack or freebase one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high one or more times during their life - YRBS



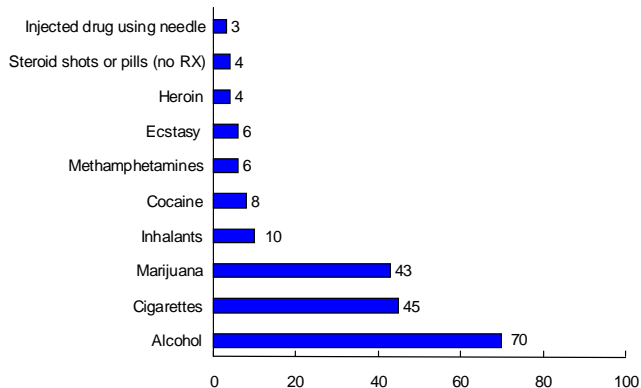
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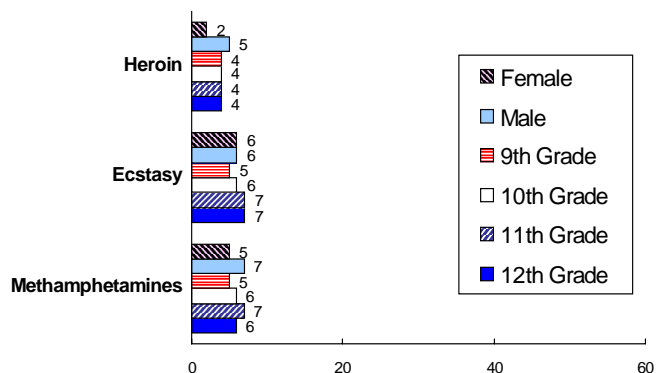
Risk Behavior: Lifetime Use, Age of Initiation, and Use on School Property

Rationale (Alcohol, Drug Use, and Crime): In Rhode Island there were over 900 juvenile arrests and referrals to Family Court in 2002 for drug and alcohol related offenses. This represented 10% of all the referrals to Family Court that year. In addition, over half (55%) of the incarcerated population at the Training School were receiving substance abuse treatment in December 2002. (Source: 2003 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook)

Percentage of RI high school students who used the following substances one or more times in their lifetime - 2005 YRBS



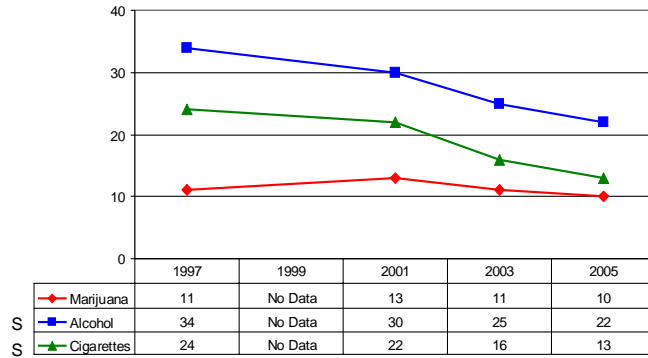
Percentage of RI high school students who used heroin, ecstasy or methamphetamines one or more times during their life - 2005 YRBS



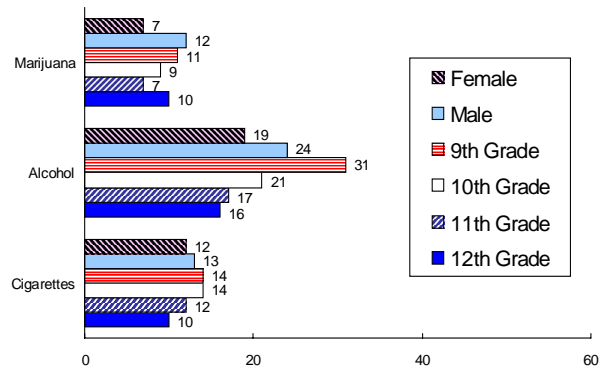
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Risk Behavior: Lifetime Use, Age of Initiation, and Use on School Property (Continued)

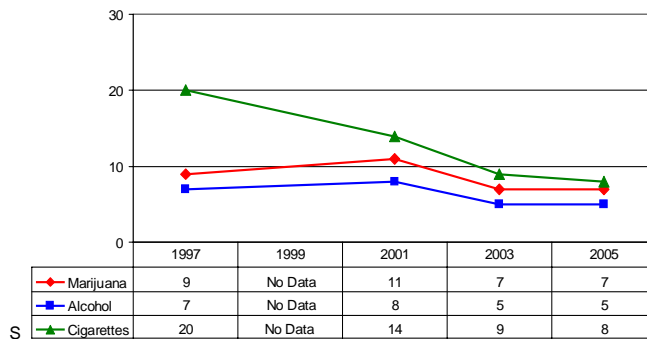
Percentage of RI high school students who used the following substances for the first time before age 13 - YRBS



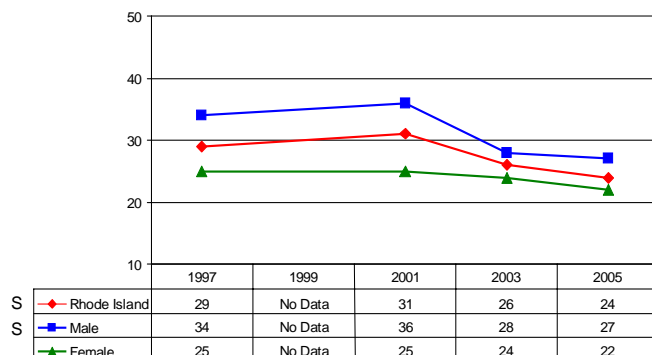
Percentage of RI high school students who used the following substances for the first time before age 13 – 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who used the following substances on school property one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property by someone during the past 12 months - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property by someone during the past 12 months – 2005 YRBS

